

# A Mother in Israel.

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SKETCH OF THE LATE MRS. D. B. BLAIR.

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WE often look back with pleasing melancholy to the scenes and events of our early years, and the memory recalls with tearful affection the beloved forms of our departed friends with whom we often took sweet counsel on earth, but who have gone before us to their heavenly home, and are now standing around the throne of God. It delights us to review the happy days and hours which we spent together, the mutual joys and sorrows, the common trials and difficulties, and the scenes and places which we have witnessed along with them. With feelings of this kind the following lines are written in memory of one who was greatly beloved during her life and is now greatly missed since her departure.

The late Mrs. Blair, whose maiden name was Mary Sibella McLean, was the second daughter of Captain Hector Hugh McLean, of the 93rd Regiment, and Ann McLeod. She was truly a daughter of the church, for on the mother's side she belonged to a family of whom

several generations in succession were ministers of the Presbyterian Church, both in Scotland and America. Her great-grandfather was the Rev. Archibald McLean, minister of the parish of Kilfinichen and Ross, Mull, about the middle of the last century. He was an eminent minister of the Gospel, and was commonly known among the people by the name of Mr. Archibald. Her mother's father was the Rev. Neil McLeod, of whom Dr. Samuel Johnston said that "he was the clearest headed man that he had met with in the Western Islands." He married Margaret McLean, daughter of Mr. Archibald, whom he succeeded as minister of the parish of Ross, Mull, and was the father of the Rev. Alexander McLeod, D. D., of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, New York, whose son was the Rev. John Neil McLeod, Mrs. Blair's cousin. The Rev. Dr. McLean, President of Princeton College, New Jersey, was her mother's cousin, being a descendant of Mr. Archibald. And a cousin of her grandfather, Neil McLeod, was Rev. Norman McLeod, minister of Morven, towards the end of last century, whose two sons were ministers in the Church of Scotland, viz., Dr. Norman McLeod of Campsie and latterly of St. Columba, and Dr. John McLeod, of Morven, who succeeded his father. Each of these also had sons in the ministry, one of whom was the late Rev. Dr. Norman McLeod of the Barony Church, Glasgow.

All these eminent servants of the Lord in the Gospel have joined the General Assembly and Church of the First-Born, it may be therefore truly said that she has been gathered to her people.

Captain McLean was the son of Lachlan McLean, of Bun-essan, commonly called Lachlan Bān, (*i. e.*,

Lachlan the Fair.) When the captain retired from the army he lived for some time at Cafrsaig, on the south side of Ross, Mull, his family consisting of three children, viz., Margaret Burnett, Lachlan Allan, and Mary Sibella, the youngest. Mary Sibella was born at Cafrsaig, on the 9th November, 1821. When she was ten years old her father removed to Campbellton, in Kintyre, in order that his children might have an opportunity of attending the Academy or High School taught by Dr. Brunton in that place, and thus receive the benefit of a good education. Here they continued for some years attending the High School, and after leaving school Mary went to England to live with a near relative in Yorkshire. When Mrs. McLean became a widow she returned to Mull with her two daughters, Margaret and Mary, and for a time resided with her widowed sister, Mrs. McLean, of Ardfinaig, in Ross, Mull. Here they lived at the time of the Disruption in 1843, and from their well-known sympathy with the evangelical party, they cast in their lot with, and became zealous advocates of the principles of, the Free Church of Scotland.

In the winter of 1844 Mary became acquainted with him who was destined to be her future husband while he was in the Isle of Mull as a Home Missionary between Brolas and Torosay. In 1847 or 1848 Mrs. McLean with her daughters removed to Oban where the eldest, Margaret, met with George Grierson, teacher of the High School of that place to whom she was married. After this Mr. Grierson removed to Perthshire to teach the High School set up at Aberfeldy ~~by~~ by the late Marquis of Bredalbane. Mrs. McLean, his mother-in-law, with Mary her daughter accompanied

him, and lived with him at Aberfeldy during the space of two years. While they were here the Rev. D. B. Blair returned from Nova Scotia in November, 1850, and after nine months on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1851, he and Mary Sibella were united in the bonds of marriage by the Rev. Donald Clarke, Free Church minister at Aberfeldy. In the month of September they sailed for Nova Scotia in the good ship *Mic-Mac*, and landing at Halifax were warmly received by the late Dr. Forrester and his excellent wife. After a long and wearisome journey over Mount Thom to Pictou, they ultimately arrived at Barney's River, where they took up their permanent residence, and lived together in peace, love and happiness nearly thirty-one years, until death suddenly severed the connection on the morning of Tuesday, the 6th June, 1882.

Mrs. Blair was beloved by all who knew her, especially by the members of her own congregation, whose spiritual welfare she always endeavoured to promote. She devoted herself particularly to the religious instruction of the young and in the Sabbath School taught a class of girls who respected her as a mother. Many of the young women taught by her are married and settled in families around in different parts of the congregation, and on the day when she was lying cold in the arms of death they came in numbers to see her lifeless form and testified their love by the copious streams of tears which they shed over her body.

She was eminently a woman of prayer. Before undertaking any special duty or engagement she consulted the Lord, seeking counsel and direction, as well as strength, to enable her to perform the duty. She

was much in secret prayer. Her example was a constant reminder to her husband of the necessity of self-dedication and devotedness to the Lord. Every morning as she got up, her first work was to bow the knee at the footstool of the throne of grace, and every evening after the duties of the day were over, her last work before lying down to rest was to commit her soul to the care of the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls.

She was most unselfish in her disposition, truly exemplifying the apostolic injunction, "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." She attended to the things of others to the neglect of her own things. Her heart was devotedly attached to her own family for whose benefit she laboured incessantly, night and day, both with head and hands. If they were properly cared for it was all she wished, it was all her delight. It afforded her the highest enjoyment to make others comfortable and happy. She was of a shy, modest, retiring nature, not wishing to obtrude herself on others at unseasonable hours, but shrinking from anything like display. She was always a keeper at home, never fond of going about from house to house, merely for the sake of seeing and hearing what was going on among the people. But she delighted to visit friends for whom she had a special regard, and was always ready to visit the sick and afflicted, if she thought she would be of any service to them, or relieve them in any way. Her visits were visits of mercy rather than visits of pleasure.

Her humility and self-denial were exemplary. She was contented with her lot, seeking not great things for herself, but satisfied with whatever the Lord gave

her. She did not take pleasure in gaudy show or gorgeous apparel; not in the outward adorning of plaiting the hair and wearing of gold, or putting on rich or costly garments. Her ornaments were those of the inner man of the heart in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great price. Following the example of the holy women of old time, who trusted in God, and adorned themselves with the garments of holiness and humility, being in subjection to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him lord. She truly proved herself to be a daughter of Sarah by the respect and tender regard which she manifested for her husband. Her value was not generally known. To her own family she was an inestimable treasure which can never be replaced in this world. Her children loved her and she loved them dearly. Her counsel and example are ever before them, and cannot be forgotten by them while they live. It is now they fully comprehend her worth when she is taken from them.

On Monday morning the 29th May, she was in her usual health, but on Wednesday evening, the 31st, she was seized with erysipelas of the most malignant type in her left arm, and when her husband returned home from the Synod on Saturday he found her lying in bed very sick. He said to her "I never saw you so sick, I fear the time of separation is come." She replied, "It looks like it. I never felt so weak, my strength is all gone." Dr. Murray was sent for to see her on Monday, and she rejoiced when he came. Being at this time unable to speak, on account of swelling in her tongue, she asked for a slate and wrote



down the question, "Is there any hope of life for me, or do you think it is death?" The doctor told her that there was little or no hope. This intelligence she received with calm resignation and wrote again, "Will the struggle be long, or will I suffer much?" The doctor said to her he thought it would not be long. She then wrote down on the slate, "I am glad to see you, doctor, and obliged to you for telling me so plainly your opinion of my case." The doctor then asked her what were her views as to the future, and immediately she wrote down the words, "The future is bright, bright, all bright." She was quite sensible to the last and knew every one that came in, and was glad to see them. At three in the morning she fell into a heavy sleep and continued so till a little after eight o'clock on Tuesday morning when she silently breathed her last without a struggle, and her spirit went to God her Saviour who redeemed her with his precious blood, to join the General Assembly and Church of the First-Born whose names are written in heaven. One of the elders of the congregation who came in to see her body said: "She was truly a mother in Israel." Like the sister of Martha it might be said of her: "Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her," and the description of the virtuous woman might be applied to her, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

## MARBH-RANN.

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### CO-SHEIRM :

Far och ! us och ! us och mo leon !  
 Tha bean mo rùin an diugh fo'n fhòd  
 Tha bean mo rùin an diugh fo'n fhòd  
 Cha seinn mi ceòl gu h-aighearach.

Tha tigh an Lagain falamh, fuar,  
 'Na āros doilleir, dubh gun tuar,  
 Oir chaidh an solus as bho'n stuaidh  
 Bha uaireigin a'lasadh ann.

Och dh'fhag sin mise 'n diugh fo ghruaim,  
 A' caoidh gu deurach aig an uaigh ;  
 Oir rinn am bās do spioladh bhuam,  
 Mo chreach ! bu chruaidh an sgaradh e.

A Mbàiri ghaolach a' chùil bhàin,  
 Bu ghoirt a' bhuille dhuinn do bhās,  
 Ochoin ! is mise fhuair mo chràdh,  
 Nuair chàireadh anns an anart thu.

Tri fichead bliadhna bha thu dh'aois  
 Nuair fhuair thu saighead gheur an àig,  
 B'e sud bha guineach dhuit, a ghaoil,  
 An uair nach d'fhaod thu carachadh.

Nis tha mo chridhe, briste, brùit,  
 Oir thréig mo mhisneach mi 's mo shūnd  
 Is tric na deòir a'ruith le m'shūil  
 Nuair bhios mi 'n cùiltibh falaichte.



[LITERAL TRANSLATION.]

## ELEGY.

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CHORUS :

Alas ! alas ! alas my wound !  
 My dearest wife is under ground !  
 My dearest wife is under ground !  
 I loathe the sound of mirthfulness.

Now Laggan house is void and cold,  
 A gloomy mansion, dark and old ;  
 The light is perish'd from the fold  
 Which lately shone so brilliantly.

Ah ! this has cover'd me with gloom,  
 I weep and mourn beside the tomb ;  
 Death wrench'd thee quickly from my home,  
 'Twas hard, alas ! to separate.

O ! fair hair'd Mary, dearest love,  
 A painful blow thy death did prove ;  
 With sorrow I could hardly move,  
 When in the shroud we wrapped thee.

At three score years and little more,  
 Death's arrow smote thee sharp and sore ;  
 The arrow pierc'd to thy heart's core,  
 And left thee cold and powerless.

My heart is therefore broken down,  
 My courage fails, my joy is gone,  
 My cheeks with tears are oft bestrown,  
 When I'm alone in privacy.

Oir sgoilteadh as a chéil' mo chrìdh  
 An uair a thaisgeadh thu sa' chill;  
 Thug sin mo chàil bhuain us mo chli,  
 'Se dh'fhāg mi sgith ro smalanach.

Bu tearc do leithid am measg bhan;  
 'Sann leat a b'ionmhuinn a bhi glan,  
 Do chaithe-beatha bha gun smal,  
 Bu mhodhail, taitneach, banail thu.

Oir bha thu beusach, geanail, suairc,  
 Ro iorasal, us ciuin, gun uaill,  
 Cha-n fhaca sinn air d'aghaidh gruaime,  
 Cha chualas riabh a' talach thu.

Is òg a thug thu suas thu féin  
 Gu creideamh ann an Criosd, Mac Dhē,  
 Us lean thu dlùth ris anns gach ceum,  
 A' ruith do rèis le faighidinn.

O! Mhairi, b' iongantach an grādh  
 A thug thu dhomh gun choimeas dā,  
 Dian, seasmhach, dìongalta, gach lā,  
 Us dileas, cāirdeil, maireannach.

Is truagh! nach mise fhuair am bās,  
 Air son do bheatha, bhean mo ghrāidh,  
 Cha bhiodh mo chridhe 'n diugh 'ga chrādh,  
 Gu brōnach, sgāinte, fadalach.

Cha deachaidh tu a beachd mo shūl  
 Bho'n latha chuireadh thu san ūir;  
 Oir cuimhnicheam gu tric as ūr  
 An comunn-rūin a bh' agam riut.

Och! dh'fhāg thu sinne nis gu léir  
 Ro chianail, muladach ad dhēigh,  
 A'caoidh mar rinneadh oirne beum,  
 Nuair chaidh thu fèin a ghearradh uainn.

Gach coire, gach doire, 's gach eas,  
 Bheir sud am chuimhne, ghraidh, do chneas;  
 'S gach àite far am bithinn leat,  
 Thar leam gum faic mi fathast thu.

How did my soul with sorrow cleave  
 When down they laid thee in the grave,  
 Desire and vigour did me leave;  
 It made me weary, sorrowful.

'Mong women scarce thy like was seen,  
 Thy great delight was to be clean;  
 Thy life was pure from stains of sin,  
 Mild, modest, pleasant, woman-like.

Chaste, gentle, cheerful, thee we tried,  
 Both meek and humble, without pride;  
 On thee a frown we never spied,  
 We never heard thee murmuring.

Thou didst devote thyself when young,  
 To faith in Christ, God's only son,  
 Him thou hast follow'd all along,  
 Thy race was run most patiently.

To me thy love, O Mary dear,  
 Was wonderful beyond compare,  
 Keen, steadfast, lasting, always there,  
 True, friendly, faithful, durable.

Would I had died! beloved wife,  
 To save thy dear and precious life,  
 My soul would not be torn with strife,  
 Distracting grief and loneliness.

Thou hast not vanished from my view  
 Since that day when we laid thee low;  
 I often call to mind anew  
 Thy sweet and pure companionship.

Ah! thou hast left us all alone,  
 Sad, melancholy, woe-begone;  
 We mourn because a breach was done  
 Which cut thee down so rapidly.

Each grove, and dell, and waterfall  
 Thy lovely form to me recall;  
 With thee I visited them all,  
 Methinks I see thee resting there.

Us chi mi oibrean do dha laimh  
 Air feadh an tighe anns gach àit,  
 Och ! duisgidh sin mo bhron gun dàil,  
 Oir thig do bhàs am aire-sa.

Air feadh na h-oidhche ann am shuain,  
 Feuch ! saoilidh mi gun cluinn mo chluas,  
 Do ghuth bha milis, ciuin, gun ruais,  
 Us dūisgear suas le cabhaig mi.

Air uairibh thig gu m'inntinn smuain  
 Gur ann a chaidh thu greis air chuairt,  
 Thar leam gu bheil thu teachd san uair.  
 'S gun cluinnear fuaim do chasan leam.

Ged chi mi daoine bho gach àird  
 A' coinneachadh a chéil' gach là,  
 Gidheadh chan fhaic mi thus', a ghráidh,  
 Bho'n dhuin am bās fo ghlasaibh thu.

Nam biodh tu bhuam am iomall tir,  
 Bhiodh dūil gum pilleadh tu a ris,  
 Ach cha bhi dūil agam o'n chùill,  
 Gum pill thu rium sa' bheatha so.

Ged sheasas mì aig bile d'uaigh  
 Cha-n 'eil an sin ach coinneamh fhuar,  
 Oir tha thu 'n cadal trom ad shuain,  
 Cha chluinn do chluas, cha labhair thu.

Cha chuir thu furan orm no failt,  
 Cha mho a ghlacas tu mo lamh ;  
 Cha-n abair thu rium, " Ciamar thá ?  
 " Am bheil thu slàn ? am fallain duit ? "

Is dian mo cheangal riut gu bráth ;  
 'Se bhios 'na shòlas dhomh air neāmh,  
 A mach bho Iosa, fear mo ghráidh,  
 Thu fein a ghnáth bhí maille rium.

Is diomhair, teann an ceangal caomh  
 Tha eadar fear us bean a ghaoil ;  
 Mun d'rinn am bās a chur fa sgaoil,  
 Cha saoilinn cho ro dhaingeann e.

Thy handiwork is also seen  
 Both here and there, the house within,  
 This wakens up my sorrow keen,  
 Rememb'ring thee, my absent one.

At midnight, in my dreams, I hear  
 Thy calm, sweet voice, so full of cheer,  
 Methinks its sound comes to my ear,  
 I start, when near I fancy thee.

At times, I think, when left alone,  
 That on a visit thou art gone,  
 And that thou art returning soon,  
 I hear thy sound and pattering.

Though all around me I see men  
 Who daily meet and part again,  
 Yet thee, my love, I see not then,  
 Death binds thee in his fastenings.

If thou wert in a distant place,  
 I would expect to see thy face;  
 But thou wilt never more retrace  
 Thy steps from death's dark mansion-house.

Though I shall stand beside thy mound,  
 Cold is that meeting, as the ground,  
 Thy sleep is heavy, long and sound,  
 Thy ear and tongue are paraliz'd.

Thou won't me welcome, nor salute,  
 Nor take my hand, thy voice is mute,  
 Nor sayst, "How art thou standing out?  
 "Art thou in health and happiness?"

Strong ties me ever bind to thee,  
 In heaven my chief joy will be,  
 That next to Christ who made me free,  
 Thou art with me for ever there.

A mystic bond unites in life  
 A man and his beloved wife,  
 Till death dissolv'd it with his knife:  
 I never felt the strength of it.

Cha-n urrainn domh mo bhròn san am  
 A chur a nis an òrdugh cainnt;  
 Le mulad lionadh mi cho teann  
 'S gur gann a ni mi labhairt leis.

Nuair dhùineas cadal bàis mo shuil,  
 O! cāiribh sios mi anns an ūir,  
 An taic ri Mairi bean mo rùin;  
 Oir 's cūbhraidh leam an leabadh sìn,

Nis beannaicht' gun robh 'n Dia bith-bhuan,  
 e Is e thug dhomh, is ~~7~~ thug bhuam;  
 Gach iasad maith a gheibh mi bhuaith,  
 Sin bheir mi suas gu toileach dha.





My sorrow now I cannot tell,  
Nor language can describe it well ;  
I cannot speak as now I feel,  
For I am filled with melancholy.

When death shall close mine eyes at last,  
Then lay me sleeping in the dust  
Beside dear Mary, there to rest,  
Sweet, pleasant, is that bed to me.

Now blessed be the Lord for aye :  
He gave, and now He took away :  
What He hath lent me for a day,  
Let me surrender willingly.

